Whatever happened to Felix Yaniewicz?[1]

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On 16 October 1846, in the operating theatre under what is now known as the Ether Dome at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, a dental surgeon, William T Q Morton, gave the first acceptable demonstration of anaesthesia and the substance he used was ether.

Following this, Henry J Bigelow, of evacuator fame, who at the time made the classical remark 'Gentlemen, this is no humbug' (the motto of my specialty ever since), wrote concerning this happening to his friend, Dr Francis Boot of London, who in turn wrote to the *Lancet* and to Robert Liston, Professor of Clinical Surgery at the University of London. Liston, as a consequence, on 21 December amputated a leg in that hospital under ether administered by a surgical instrument maker, Mr Squire. On Monday 28 December, at a meeting of the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society held in the Royal Institution, Colquitt Street, Mr Francis Archer, a surgeon to the Borough Gaol in Great Homer Street (the main prison which was soon to move to Walton, where Archer continued his post), read what in the words of the Minutes is described as 'An account of surgical operations performed on the human subject, during insensibility to pain, caused by the inhalation of Sulphuric Ether Vapour'. These minutes were written by the Secretary of the Society, Mr Felix Yaniewicz, a dental surgeon practising at No. 60 Mount Pleasant, a house now demolished to make way for the YMCA building.

Two weeks later, at the next meeting of the Society, the Secretary wrote the following modest minute: 'Mr Yaniewicz exhibited an apparatus for inhaling the vapour of Ether and stated that he had applied it successfully.' Thus, on 11 January 1847, Felix Yaniewicz carved for himself a niche, be it ever so small, in the history of medicine in Liverpool. So small in fact is the niche that almost from that day he disappeared from the scene. The development of the technique which he initiated was immediately taken over by others. This has puzzled me. How could a man of such repute that he became the Secretary of one of the most learned societies in the country, for I believe the 'Litt. and Phil.' to have been just that, and with enterprise sufficient to dare a demonstration of this new and obviously hazardous technique, disappear so completely?

Let me first set the scene in the Liverpool of Monday, 11 January 1847, and in so doing perhaps offer some consolation to those who believe that our times are unique in terms of depression and in degree of oppression and violence to the individual. Queen Victoria had been on the throne for nine years and married to Albert for six. *The Times* of that morning stated that she had walked for twenty minutes in the park. Peel was still Prime Minister and had just succeeded in repealing the Corn Laws. So trade was free and the price of bread was expected to come down; it had been until then prohibitively expensive for the poor. Liverpool with its neighbouring boroughs on the east bank of the Mersey had a population of close on half a

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million and the population was rising monthly as a result of the inflow of immigrants from stricken Ireland. The business of the town thrived, as did the businessmen, for this was the port for the burgeoning industry of the north-west.

A direct link with London by rail had just been forged by the formation of the London and North Western Railway within the past twelve months. A passenger could travel across London on a horsedrawn bus, catch a train at Euston and, having been hauled up the Camden slope by cable, travel by steampower via the London–Birmingham line, then on the Grand Junction Line linking Birmingham with the sixteen-year-old Manchester–Liverpool railway and so arrive at Lime Street Station only some ten hours later. If he were to come on the Parliamentary train run by the company to fulfil the provisions of the Railway Regulation Act of 1844, which stated that every company should work one train a day over all their lines at a speed of not less than 12 miles per hour, using covered coaches and offering fares of not more than one penny a mile, he would not arrive in Liverpool until perhaps the next day. The railways did not encourage third class passengers of the lower orders. Lime Street Station, made possible by the tunnels cut through solid rock from Edge Hill, had been opened eight years before, in 1839. No one in 1847 could fail to wonder at the prodigious development of rail transport in Britain. Stephenson's Liverpool to Manchester Railway had only been opened in 1830 and yet between 1843, only thirteen years later, and 1848 the mileage of rail expanded from a mere 2000 to 5000, a rate never since nor ever likely to be exceeded. Along with the railways, even faster methods of communication were being developed; and it surprised me to find that some 1600 miles of telegraph line accompanied the rail lines in 1847, and that on that Monday morning one could have sent a telegram from Liverpool to London.

Liverpool was a city of the sort of contrast we are able to see today most clearly in developing countries; contrast between the lot of the affluent merchants and the appalling living conditions of the poor and more especially of the Irish immigrants arriving in this promised land in their thousands. The latter provided new problems for a city which hitherto had been fairly situated, with its population of merchants and seamen. All concerned with the port had been fairly sure of a reasonable living. Now the affluent lived in the gracious houses of St Anne Street, Rodney Street and Abercromby Square. The really rich were beginning to emigrate to new houses constructed on the gentle slopes of the river bank at Aigburth and the Dingle and some were looking ever further afield towards Crosby and Woolton. On the other hand, the working classes huddled in courts and cellars in the north end of the town. Of a population of just under a quarter of a million the census of 1841 revealed a working class population of 160 000 and these were the court and cellar dwellers. This was before the great immigration; one can hardly imagine the situation after it.

Although there had been a steady stream of Irish into Liverpool since the miseries of the 1797 rebellion, it was the failure of the potato crop of the year before our date and the consequent famine that radically changed the character of the city. More than 90 000 entered Liverpool in the first three months of 1846 and in January 1847 they still came in their thousands. During the next twelve months some 300 000 were to arrive and, although the majority passed on to America, enough remained to create the most dire and wretched poverty and disease known in the whole country. This is a story often retold, but which must be repeated, for it forms the backcloth to Felix Yaniewicz's life in Liverpool. To control the penniless and hunger-mad mobs, 20 000 men of the town were sworn in as special constables and 2000 regular troops were encamped at Everton. Typhus raged (5400 cases had been recorded in the month of June previous to our Monday) and cholera was endemic in the city, with frequent devastating acute epidemics. Of necessity, new voluntary hospitals were opened: the Southern, then in Greenland Street, in 1842; the Northern, in Great Howard Street, in 1845; and even the Infirmary, established in Brownlow Street in 1824, although supplemented by the charitable dispensaries with their free outpatient services, was quite unable to cope with its quota of wretched sick or elderly poor. So they were herded into the Brownlow Workhouse Infirmary which at any one time housed, sleeping huddled together, many on the floor, some 1200 souls suffering from every known disease. The hundreds of incurables, together with the

very old, feeble and helpless, were looked after by what were described as able-bodied women of the town; completely untrained, of course, and often vicious. At night the wards were either locked up without attention when the patients were too old or ill to cause trouble, or, when the less ill were packed together, patrolled by policemen to prevent disorder or lechery.

It is well known that these conditions led to the passing of the Sanitary Act in 1846, the previous year, and to the appointment of Dr Duncan, Physician to the Royal Infirmary, Lecturer in Materia Medica in the Medical School and from 1843–45 its Dean, as the first Medical Officer of Health.

This look at our city of 11 January 1847, may help us to put into perspective the concern with our standard of living today and with the miseries and violence of contemporary life; but it may beg the question what the next 130 years may portend for the city – advance or regression. It was a city of contrast indeed, for we had some fine public buildings such as the Exchange, the Bluecoat School, the Town Hall, the Lyceum and very many fine churches.

There were many centres for music and drama: the Music Hall, the Amphitheatre, Drury Lane Theatre, the Philharmonic Hall just completed that year, the Theatre Royal in Williamson Square and the Concert Hall in Lord Nelson Street. St George's Hall was being completed on the site of the old Infirmary. All the great singers: Malibran, Jenny Lind, Lablache and Grisi, came to entertain the people of Liverpool and the theatre was enthusiastically attended by all who could afford at least the price of a ticket to the gallery. Riots were not uncommon in the theatre when fighting broke out between supporters of this or that actor or singer. There is a story in the *Liverpool Times* of the day which describes an incident at the Theatre Royal, during a performance of a play called 'Used Up' on the Saturday before this particular Monday:

> 'A young man of respectable exterior in the gallery had been the aggressor in one of the usual "rows" the "Gods" are so fond of indulging in, and on the appearance of a policeman to remove the offender and restore order, the infatuated simpleton labouring apparently under the influence of liquor, rushed forward and sprung over the front seat, with the intention of throwing himself into the pit. With the instinct of self-preservation, however, he clung to the iron railing running round the gallery, and there remained for some time suspended by his hands, but without any effort on his part to save himself. In the meantime, the audience were in breathless suspense, everyone expecting that he would fall, and that part of the pit directly under him was quickly deserted. The policeman had by this time a firm hold of his collar, and with the assistance of the bystanders, whose eagerness greatly impeded their efforts, succeeded, with much difficulty, in dragging him back into the gallery. On being remonstrated with he coolly replied that the fear of being taken into custody and the consequent exposure, had made him prefer the alternative of suicide.'

Such was Liverpool in January 1847 and such were the happenings in the city about which Felix might have read in his morning paper. He would also see, as now, complaints concerning rising prices – especially that of the tea that he would certainly drink with his breakfast. The heavy duty made tea the exclusive drink of the well-to-do. The poor and lower classes had to make do with so-called cocoa, a beverage containing 'a minimum acquaintanceship with the bean of that name together with various farinaceous materials and mostly consisting of ground chalk'. There were reported the usual crop of rapes and robberies, one of which sounds very familiar a century later. Two men entered a shop and asked to see a tray of rings. While the assistant's attention was distracted the tray was snatched and a smart get-away made. There were the usual advertisements for shops, breweries, dentists and doctors; many of the latter very amusing. There were reports of widespread riots and uprisings in many countries, France, Germany and even Switzerland; but novel to us would be the story of the 'Lady of Wembley', I quote from the *Liverpool Times*, 'who was lacing her stays on Wednesday morning last, when the lace broke, and a severe shock was experienced by the lady, bruising her back and sides, as though gun powder had exploded near her . . . On examination it was found that the lace was made from the material, now so much the subject of conversation, "gun-cotton" and had been sent by some friend in an envelope to the lady in question as a new invention for which a patent had been obtained'. This was evidently the Victorian equivalent of the letter bomb. Finally in

the morning's papers would be the various departures and arrivals of sailing ships and of the steamships which were already driving them off the sea. Billowing canvas was making way for Masefield's 'salt caked smoke-stack'. Ships such as the RMS *Britannia* could arrive in Liverpool from Boston in ten days, and may well have brought, two months before, the letter from Bigelow which provided Felix Yaniewicz with what was probably his most important twenty-four hours.

Having read his paper and drunk his breakfast tea on that Monday morning, Felix Yaniewicz, bachelor, put on his frock coat, received his tall hat from Margaret Kearon, the maidservant with whom alone apparently he shared No. 60 Mount Pleasant, and stepped out into the cold grey morning carrying with more than usual care a carefully wrapped parcel. He stepped warily because the frost had made the steps from his house and the rough paving and cobblestones more than usually hazardous. We know it was such a morning, for the *Liverpool Mercury* on the following Friday contained a retrospective weather report which seems all too familiar: 'For the last fortnight we had singularly chill and gloomy weather, the sky being hid by dense murky clouds, so that there has hardly been obtained a glimpse of the sun by day or the stars by night. It has been singularly raw and cold, and the temperature often below freezing, though there was no frost or very little until Sunday night last. On Monday and Tuesday the frost was more severe, the thermometer having fallen, on the latter, eight degrees below freezing point . . .' Turning right from his house Felix would walk up the hill towards Rodney Street; passing along the elegant street housing many of the wealthy upper middle class; past the house where Gladstone, five years his senior, was born, to Gambier Terrace; down Upper Parliament Street, past the elegant Archway gates of St James' Cemetery with its unique catacombs; and so to No. 1 Upper Parliament Street, the South Dispensary. There at his invitation awaited the members of staff, among whom was Mr Alfred Higginson, surgeon to the Southern Hospital and distinguished past President of the Liverpool Medical Institution.

In the past two weeks Felix had been busy giving all the time he had to spare from his dental practice to the designing of, and probably to trying on himself, apparatus for the vaporization and inhalation of ether, the latter almost certainly purchased from Mr Waldie's Laboratories at Clay and Abraham's establishment in Bold Street. After rather nervously greeting his colleagues, apprehensive no doubt about the experiment on which he was about to embark, for it was no light thing to make a fellow being unconscious, he had the patient brought in for the extraction of an abscessed tooth. He was asked to breathe from Yaniewicz's apparatus for a few minutes and then, according to the press report, Yaniewicz removed 'a firmly fixed lower molar tooth, without the patient exhibiting the slightest sensibility of pain.' The whole procedure was over in five minutes. Following the apparently unquestioned success of his demonstration he was presumably congratulated by his colleagues who could not fail to have been impressed; certainly Higginson was. And, as Felix returned to No. 60 Mount Pleasant to complete his day's work, he must have known that a new era in surgery of all kinds had opened. That evening he set out for the Litt. and Phil. meeting where he made his report. Whether or not Higginson was present we do not know; but we do know that Higginson demonstrated his own apparatus for the administration of ether to the next meeting of the Society a fortnight later. To this I will return in a moment, as it may have some bearing on Felix's subsequent history, or rather lack of it.

Who was this Felix Yaniewicz who, rather like a shooting star, flashed across the Liverpool medical scene and then completely disappeared, leaving no trace save for these few reports in the press and in the Proceedings of the Litt. and Phil.? The facts I have been able to discover concerning his life can be summarized very briefly. He was born at 29 Lord Street by normal delivery on 12 September 1805. This I discovered from the invaluable case book of Dr Henry Park belonging to the Liverpool Medical Institution, in which Dr Park recorded carefully the details of each of the maternity cases he attended during his long life as a practitioner in Liverpool and in which is also recorded the birth of Gladstone. He was christened in St Nicholas' Church on 27 September and registered in the Baptismal Register as 'Felix

Yaniewicz, son of Felix Yaniewicz, of Lord Street, Music Seller and Eliza, formerly Breese, his wife . . .'

When Felix was 10 years old his parents took him and his two sisters to Edinburgh, where they established a home first at No. 3 Howe Street and eight years later at 84 Great King Street. So it was that he became apprenticed in dentistry in Edinburgh in 1828, at the age of 23. Soon after qualification he returned to the city of his birth; for he is recorded as being in practice at No. 44 Bold Street in 1832. After a few years he moved to No. 60 Mount Pleasant and in 1857, ten years after his ether demonstration, to No. 74 Mount Pleasant. In 1862 it appears that he sold his practice; for a dentist, Mr John Robert Goepel, is reported as living and practising at No. 74 Mount Pleasant. Felix went south where he died aged 81 years at 32 Palace Square, Penge, Lewisham, on 13 April 1886. A post mortem revealed that he died from cancer of the head of pancreas after forty-two days of jaundice. He died a bachelor.

Those are the facts; but they beg questions to which I will presume to suggest answers for which there is some circumstantial and genetic evidence. The questions are these: What led him particularly, of all the medical men and dentists of the town, to be the first to demonstrate anaesthesia? Why did he then disappear from the scene completely and within twelve months resign his Secretaryship of, and loosen his attachment to, the Litt. and Phil. Society and finally resign from it in January 1856? He joined this very distinguished Society in 1836, shortly after coming to Liverpool and such was his ability, willingness and, I believe, charm that within five years of joining he was elected Secretary. Finally, why did he in 1862 leave Liverpool for the south?

The answers to these questions may lie in his very interesting family history. He was the son of the union of a very famous Polish emigré with a Liverpool woman. His father, also Felix, was born in 1762 in Vilna, Poland, of a noble family. While a youth he was attached to the Court of King Stanislaus, who apparently took him to his residence at Nancy. Here he showed such marked musical talent that his earliest compositions, concertos for the violin, were published in Paris around 1770 when he was only 8 years old. The King arranged for him to go to Vienna where he planned to study under Haydn. Here Mozart heard him play the violin and was so impressed that Otto Jahn, in his 'Life of Mozart', considered that Mozart's Andante in A Major, K.470, was dedicated to him. Michael Kelly, the Irish tenor who created the part of Don Basilio in the 'Marriage of Figaro', reports that while in Vienna he had the pleasure of hearing two of the foremost performers on the violin in the world; and one of them was Yaniewicz. He wrote: 'Yaniewicz was a very young man, in the service of the King of Poland; he . . . touched the instrument with thrilling effect, and was an excellent leader of an orchestra.' Yaniewicz was introduced in Vienna to a Polish gentlewoman or, according to some, a Princess who offered to take him to Italy. Mr Yaniewicz, as one report put it, 'availed himself of her protection' and so left the King's service. In Italy he listened to the great Nardini and Pugnani, the two most famous pupils of the legendary violinist Tartini. After three years in Italy he returned to Paris where, for a time, he received a pension from the Duc D'Orléans and served in the household of his daughter, Mlle D'Orléans, as her violinist and singing tutor.

At the time of the French Revolution he lost all his possessions and came as an emigré to London. Here he again came into contact with Haydn and played in a Solomon benefit concert for him in the presence of the Prince of Wales. For several seasons he played in London and, during the same period, conducted subscription concerts in Manchester and Liverpool. It must have been on one of these occasions that he met a Liverpool lady, Miss Eliza Breese. They married in 1800 and bought a house in Upper Birkett Street, off St Anne Street. Yaniewicz senior had drive and ambition. He continued to give concerts in London and became a founder member of the London Philharmonic Society and, in its first season, one of the conductors of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Yet he still found time to run a business as a music seller and publisher at No. 29 Lord Street, Liverpool. In the house over the business, three of their five children were born: two sons, who apparently died in infancy, and in 1805, Felix. Shortly after the arrival of Felix junior, his father moved to live away from the business to a house in Lime Street, where the next child, a daughter Felicity, was born in 1807. In 1810 he took a Mr

Green into a partnership, which lasted three years only – Mr Green going into business on his own.

In 1815, Yaniewicz was invited to be the Conductor of the first Edinburgh Festival Orchestra and moved to the northern metropolis; to be precise to No. 3 Howe Street, where his youngest daughter, Pauline, was born. When he moved from Liverpool, he took into partnership in the Lord Street Music Shop Mr W G Weiss who was married to Ann Hunter, reputed to have been the niece of John Hunter the surgeon. Two years later Yaniewicz senior retired from the business, leaving it to be run by Weiss and, one source suggests, young Felix as his partner. This probably accounts for Felix junior's return to Liverpool within a year of qualifying. Purely by chance my son, David, researching in the Records Office met the great-great-great grandson of Weiss who was tracing the history of his family and who gave us the story of Ann Hunter, but also informed us that Weiss's son was named Felix. He too became a dentist as did the grandson Felix Henry; a gentle tribute surely to the influence and charm of the Felix who is the subject of our interest.

Yaniewicz senior is recorded as giving a farewell concert in Edinburgh in 1829 at the age of 67. He continued to live with his spinster daughter, Felicity, at 84 Great King Street until his death at the age of 86 in 1848; just one year after his son's ether demonstration in Liverpool. Both the daughters were accomplished musicians; the younger, Pauline Francis, married Mr Jackson Townsend, a solicitor of Liverpool, whom she must have met during a visit to her brother. The elder, Felicity Therese, lived on in Edinburgh at Great King Street until 1863, when she moved to Surrey, at the same time as her brother moved south from Liverpool. She is reported by Sainsbury in his 'Dictionary of Musicians' of 1825 as 'an admirable pianist, possessing great force, neatness and brilliance of touch, and execution. As a singer, her pure and unpretending style, and delicate intonation have given great pleasure to her hearers in public and in private.'

The purpose of going into the family history in such detail is to search for a clue to the ambition of the young dentist of Mount Pleasant which led him to experiment with ether. Although a member of the Litt. and Phil. since 1836, the only contribution apart from his secretaryship he had made was in 1844, when he 'exhibited specimens of Writing, Printing and Engraving and explained a new and simple process by which they were accurately copied – (The Anastatic Process)'. He was obviously a highly respected practitioner; otherwise he would not have been a member of so select and distinguished a society. But is it not possible that he lived under his father's shadow; and that, in his bachelor loneliness at 60 Mount Pleasant, he had time to brood on that fact? Ether gave him the opportunity to make his mark; and his keenness to do so is demonstrated by his letter to the *Liverpool Mercury* on 15 January 1847 and to the *Liverpool Albion* on 18 January 1847. He wrote in protest that his demonstration, in spite of being reported in other papers, had not been mentioned in them. I quote from that letter:

'Should you insert in *The Albion* the report of the proceedings of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Monday last, as in the *Times* and *Courier*, I shall feel obliged by your adding, in reference to my communication on the effects produced by the inhalation of sulphuric ether vapour, that I have every morning since then, and in the presence of a large assembly of medical gentlemen extracted teeth from patients under the influence of the vapour. In some few cases nausea and coughing prevented its exhibition, but in all the cases where it was inhaled such insensibility to pain was produced that the patients declared that, though conscious of the operation, they had not experienced any pain; and such slight inconvenience was felt that, in two cases, the process was repeated, at the patient's request, for the extraction of other teeth. The apparatus used was very simple, and was so invariably successful that I must repeat my opinion that the reported cases of failure may have been caused from the means employed not having supplied sufficient quantity of the vapour. As, however, the effects produced are very different in different individuals, and different quantities of the vapour are required to produce insensibility, it must be used with judgment; as an overdose might produce disagreeable results.'

Despite this publicity there is no doubt that he was fundamentally a retiring and kindly man and, like so many Poles, extremely sensitive. This leads to the hypothetical answer to my

second question as to why, after that day, nothing further is heard from him. Among Yaniewicz's audience at the South Dispensary was Alfred Higginson. At a meeting of the Litt. and Phil., two weeks after Yaniewicz's report on his experiment, Higginson (according to the *Transactions*) 'exhibited a simple form of stomach pump, of his own invention, without valves or stopcock, and which might be constructed for use at a very trifling cost; also an apparatus for inhaling the vapour of ether.' Despite this very modest reporting by the Secretary of the Society who was, of course, Felix, there is no doubt as to which of these subjects Higginson thought the most important. The *Liverpool Mercury* of 29 January reported that:

'At the Eye and Ear Infirmary, No. 90 Mount Pleasant, a series of very important and interesting operations were performed by Hugh Neill, Esq., the Honorary Surgeon, for the cure of cataract and other disease of the eye, some of the patients being in a state of unconsciousness to pain, produced by the inhalation of the ether vapour. With the view of removing the impression which generally prevails that operations for the cure of blindness are attended with great pain, the gentlemen connected with the press of the town and a select company were invited to attend. Amongst those present observed Dr. Raffles, the Rev. Dr. Hume, the Rev. Mr. Brown, the Rev. E. Hill, Dr. Edwards, one of the Medical Officers of the Institution, Dr. Sutherland, Mr. Bickersteth, Sir Arnold Knight, Mr. Higginson, and Mr. Blore, surgeons, Mr. George Grant, Mr. S. L. Trotman, Mr. H. Crossfield, Mr. F. Hull, Mr. J. Smith, Capt. Greig, Major Vickers etc. The first patient operated upon was John Davies, Horse Shoer. He had a cataract in the left eye, which had been injured by a kick from a horse. The ether which was administered by Mr. Higginson, surgeon, was placed in a bag, the mouthpiece of which resembled that of a speaking trumpet.'

It is notable that Felix is not listed as being present in spite of being the first in Liverpool to demonstrate ether; the first to demonstrate an apparatus at the Litt. and Phil. Was it that he was, after all, a dentist and that this was a matter for doctors? Things don't change much; for the controversy, as my anaesthetist colleagues know well, has been continued right up to this present day! Felix, although continuing to give anaesthetics, never appeared in public again. Higginson had, perhaps he thought, stolen his thunder. His father had been a virtuoso of international repute and it may well have appeared to the son that yet again he had failed to make his mark. In any case, he resigned his Secretaryship of the Litt. and Phil. on 10 January 1848, and the society recorded its appreciation of his services in the following words: 'That the best thanks of the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society be given to Felix Yaniewicz, Esq. for his kindness and attention to the interests of the Society, which he has shown during the seven years he has held the office of Honorary Secretary of the Society.' His resignation was conveyed in a letter. Six weeks later on 6 March, a ballot was taken for a member of the Council 'and Mr. Yaniewicz was declared to be duly elected'. Mr Higginson was present. It may be significant that Felix never took office as a member of the Council, for at the beginning of the 37th Session of the Society on 16 October 1848, the Council members were declared and they did not include Felix.

There is evidence in the Minutes of the Liverpool Medical Institution and particularly in those of the Litt. and Phil. that Higginson was a complete extrovert and not averse to exhibitionism. At nearly every meeting he spoke about or demonstrated apparatus or discoveries of his own. The Minutes are full of such references as: 'Mr. Higginson exhibited four plants from Norfolk . . . and stated that he had seen a plant for ventilating sewers, by the means of consuming their foul air by the heat of furnaces . . . and called attention to the fact that he himself proposed the plan some years ago to the society . . .' (which was true). He exhibited pottery dug up on the Island of Rattan in the Bay of Honduras. He exhibited 'some specimens of Cinnamon and of Nutmegs, enveloped with their arillus of 'Mace'.' He proposed new Rules for the Society; all this at the critical time in Yaniewicz's story. At the same time he was very active indeed in the Liverpool Medical Institution; and scarcely a meeting passed without some contribution from this remarkable man. He was clearly something of a genius. He was also a traditional nineteenth century, omniscient, overpowering, successful surgeon.

It is perhaps not surprising that Felix retired into his shell in the face of such competition. I detect a conflict between a brilliant doctor and surgeon, of strong personality, and a dentist of

noble ancestry but of gentle and sensitive nature. A little human touch is seen in the fact that when Felix resigned the Secretaryship of the Litt. and Phil. (obviously unexpectedly; though one must remember that his distinguished father had just died in Edinburgh) a Mr Townsend took it on *pro tempore* until Dr Inman was elected on 7 February when 'the best thanks of the Society were given to Mr Townsend, for the kindness with which he consented to fill the temporary office of Secretary'. This Mr Townsend, a solicitor, was (you may remember) the husband of Felix's younger sister Pauline, who had undoubtedly met him on one of her visits to Liverpool; perhaps when he was being entertained by Felix as a friend from the Litt. and Phil.

In 1862, Felix left Liverpool to live near Croydon; and at the same time his sister, Felicity, gave up the family home in Edinburgh where she had lived alone since the old gentleman's death. She also came to Surrey, where it is likely (though I have not been able to confirm it) that she set up house with Felix. Why did they go south? Felix, at the age of 57, retired from his practice in Liverpool (and also from the music business, if he were still, at that time, a partner). I rather think that the other sister Pauline, Mrs Townsend, had moved to London, on the death of her husband, to live close to her daughter, Pauline Douglas. And so the family was at last united.

All this was a long time in the future on 11 January 1847. That evening Felix was still flushed with success and had certainly not yet turned sour in his relationship with anaesthesia. I like to think that, after his meeting at the Litt. and Phil., as so many of us might have done, he adjourned with his brother-in-law Douglas Townsend and his sister Pauline to the newly opened restaurant in Clayton Square which that day advertised itself as providing 'An excellent steak cut in the London style with all the etceteras for 8 pennies, finished with a half pint of splendid amontillado sherry or fine flavoured port for one shilling' and perhaps the little party had their meal to the strains of their father's Divertissement No. 2, a plaintive little piece.